

LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission Minutes
Thursday, February 21, 2019, 6:30 pm
Town Hall 1st Floor Annex conference room, 730 Mass Ave

Commissioners present: Julia Forsythe, Bill Gardiner, Mel Goldsipe (vice-chair), Brooks Harrelson, Anna Watson (chair)

Absent: Lisa Krinsky, Helene Newberg

Liaisons present: Marci Shapiro-Ide (Council on Aging)

Guests: Colin Bunnell (MSW student), Linda Shoemaker (Arlington Center for the Arts)

Meeting called to order at 6:35 pm. Colin Bunnell agreed to take minutes.

Announcements

Commissioner Watson is stepping down as chair but staying on as a commissioner. The vote on a new chair and vice chair will be held at next month's meeting. Anyone who is interested is encouraged to run.

Open Forum

Linda Shoemaker, director of the Arlington Center for the Arts, spoke about Arlington Porchfest, which will be on June 8th, 12-6 pm (rain date June 9). She discussed that as in prior years, the event coincides with Pride, which has led to concerns that the ACA was disregarding the importance of Pride. The ACA wishes to coordinate with the Commission in order to ensure LGBTQ+ inclusion in the event. The Commission discussed options, including having a Porchfest stage at a Commission Pride event, perhaps at the Whittemore-Robbins House, and determined that the Pride subcommittee of the Commission would coordinate with the ACA. Registration for stages starts March 1. RC would need to decide by the end of April. ACA can help recruit performers.

Marci Shapiro-Ide (Council on Aging liaison) attending on behalf of COA intern Alison, who is putting together ABCs of LGBTQ+ Aging panel discussion for April 3. Commissioner Krinsky will be speaking at the event. The Rainbow Commission will be listed as a cosponsor. Other COA events of interest include Game Night on 3/7, Real Queer Movie Night on 4/4, AHS Inclusion Day on 4/10, a True Story Theater event on 5/4.

Minutes

Commissioner Gardiner moved approval of the November and December minutes. Commissioner Harrelson seconded. No opposed. Commissioner Goldsipe moved to approve January minutes as amended. Commissioner Gardiner seconded. Minutes approved with Commissioners Forsythe and Watson abstaining.

Correspondence received

Jan 17 – Email from a community member had offered to donate quilts and possibly becoming a volunteer coordinator. Not sure if quilts could be done in time for Pride or Town Day this year, though. Commissioner Goldsipe will follow-up and also mentioned that an option for volunteering has been added to the online mailing list form.

Jan 25 – Anna Litten at the Library asked RC to cosponsor the Arlington Reads Together presentation by the LGBT Asylum Task Force on March 13 at 7 pm. Request granted.

Jan. 26 – Email from a community member about connecting the RC & New England Aces. Commissioner Goldsipe sent a message Feb. 11 about NE Aces doing a presentation at AHS Inclusion Day. Will also check in with them about doing an Ace Week event in Oct.

Jan. 28 – Sent reply to Julie Wayman with Arlington's Community Development Block Grant and the Arlington-Somerville Continuum of Care recommending MaeBright Group and LexPride as sources for cultural competency training.

Feb. 2 – Commissioner Goldsipe had a check-in call with Amber at True Story Theater. Told them RC can't commit to participating in any grants or creating events with outside groups until after the strategic planning process is complete. Also recommended that they get cultural competency training around trans issues.

Feb. 4 – Commissioner Harrelson shared email from the Diversity Task Group about ways the RC can work with the elementary schools. Parent groups are forming and there's interest in bystander training. 3/24 training at the Senior Center. Black student caucus at AHS also wants to be trained/become trainers.

Feb. 8 – Commissioner Goldsipe replied to David Conneely, the GSA advisor at AHS, saying RC can't run any workshops for Inclusion day April 10 but recommending the GSA reach out to NE Aces and the History Project, and that if they'd like to have a Rainbow Commissioner present at the workshops, that would probably work.

Feb. 11 – Email from the Boston Pride Community Fund saying RC has been awarded \$1500 for 2019. If full \$4000 funding request is approved at Town Meeting starting July 1, the grant should be enough to cover the rest of the current fiscal year, including Pride. The grant covers \$900 for Pride picnic, three additional events for \$100 ea, and \$300 for advertising/publicity. RC is eligible to reapply for 2 additional years, up to \$2000/year.

Feb. 13 – Email from Heidi Hoffman with the ADL - The next meeting of the ADL Metro North Advisory Committee is Feb. 27, 7-8:30. Town Hall, 2nd floor.

Feb. 15 – Email from Marci Shapiro-Ide, Council on Aging - LGBTQ+ Senior Group Game Night & Cocoa is Thursday, March 7th, 6:30-8 pm. Also March 15 at Salem State is the 8th annual LGBT Elders in an Ever-Changing World conference.

Feb. 18 – Email from a Cookies & Community event attendee from Wayland thanking us for the fun event.

Feb. 19 – Email from the Human Rights Campaign announcing online Municipal Equality Index training Tuesday, February 26 at 2 pm. Commissioners Goldsipe and Gardiner will attend.

Feb. 20 – Letter to the *Advocate* from Commissioners Watson and Goldsipe printed thanking retiring Police Chief Ryan for his work with the RC.

Events

The Cookies and Community event of February 16 was discussed, as were future events. Coming up is Crafts & Community on March 16. Commissioner Harrelson volunteered to take responsibility for FoodLink order. Commissioner Goldsipe will bring drinks, paper goods, and crafts supplies. Commissioner Gardiner has crafting supplies to donate.

The upcoming Inclusion Day at the school was noted.

The Commission discussed a wish by Acting Police Chief Flaherty to host an event connecting the police and the Commission. The Commission referred the matter to the Pride subcommittee.

The Commission discussed the upcoming Drag Prom being hosted by Queer Mystic, the Council on Aging, Robbins Library, the Housing Corporation of Arlington, and the Arlington Center for the Arts, and whether the Commission would add its name to the event. The Commission discussed concerns that parts of the community might have with regard to drag, particularly among the transgender community (though Commissioner Forsythe noted that opinions there were not unanimous either), and how the Commission should decide how to endorse certain controversial activities when there was no consensus. The chair noted that for this year, the event's designation as "drag prom" was already set in stone, but that discussions should happen in regard to naming next year's events.

Commissioner Goldsipe moved that the Commission officially cosponsor and support the Drag Prom. Commissioner Harrelson seconded. The motion passed without opposition, and no commissioners abstained.

Commissioner Gardiner requested that it be noted in the minutes that the issue of how to approach events like this in the future go on the agenda on a rotating basis.

Commissioner Goldsipe noted that Asexual Awareness Week would take place in October of this year, and suggested the Commission consider putting on an event to celebrate. Goldsipe also noted that Intersex Awareness Day would take place on October 26, and that if there is no larger event, this info could be announced at a Crafts or Cookies event that month. The Commission will consider the issue at a future meeting.

Subcommittees

Commissioner Goldsipe moved to establish a Pride Subcommittee. Commissioner Gardiner seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. Commissioners Watson, Forsythe, and Gardiner agreed to serve, as did Marci Shapiro-Ide from the Council on Aging. Linda Shoemaker from ACA agreed someone from ACA would be appointed to coordinate with Porchfest.

Commissioner Goldsipe moved to establish a Policies and Procedures Subcommittee. Commissioner Gardiner seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. Commissioner Goldsipe agreed to be on this subcommittee and agreed to take responsibility for asking absent commissioners if they wished to participate.

Discussion of forming additional subcommittees as tabled for future meetings.

Other Business

Chair Watson noted there was no word on completion of the restorative justice process for the incident at the high school, and she was waiting to hear when the closing circle would take place. Commissioner Harrelson noted a number of students had also indicated they wanted transparency and closure on the matter.

The Commission discussed the upcoming strategic planning initiative. Commissioner Goldsipe agreed to liaise with Christine Bongiorno regarding this.

Upcoming community events were mentioned as listed on the agenda.

Commissioner Gardiner noted he and Commissioner Krinsky would be presenting the Commission's budget request at the Finance Committee meeting on Wednesday, February 27.

Commissioner Goldsipe moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Forsythe seconded. The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 8:21 pm.

Minutes submitted by Colin Bunnell.